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ABSTRACT

As part of a continuing program designed to provide Nevada's school population with information that will facilitate greater awareness and understanding of past and present lifestyles and contributions of Native Nevadans, this curriculum guide might constitute a social studies unit on the history of Indian education for upper elementary and/or junior high schools. Areas covered are: (1) Primitive Times (emphasis on necessity for practical education, differences in education of males and females, and the role of elders as teachers); (2) Classroom Traits and Possible Causes (a list of traits and possible causes is given; for example, "a feeling of resentment, suspicion, and sometimes hatred" is correlated with early unfortunate contact with the white culture); (3) Important Facts of the Indian Pupil (this list touches on health education, home visitation, attitude changes, etc.); and (4) Important Phases in the Education Story (development of Indian education in Nevada is traced from the early "Ranch Schools" through "Day Schools" to the public school program instigated in 1934). Also included in this guide are a word study list (120 words) and a Nevada map (county boundaries and the historical territories of the Washoe, Paiute, and Shoshone Indian tribes). (JC)

INDIANS OF NEVADA

by

HELEN DUNN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
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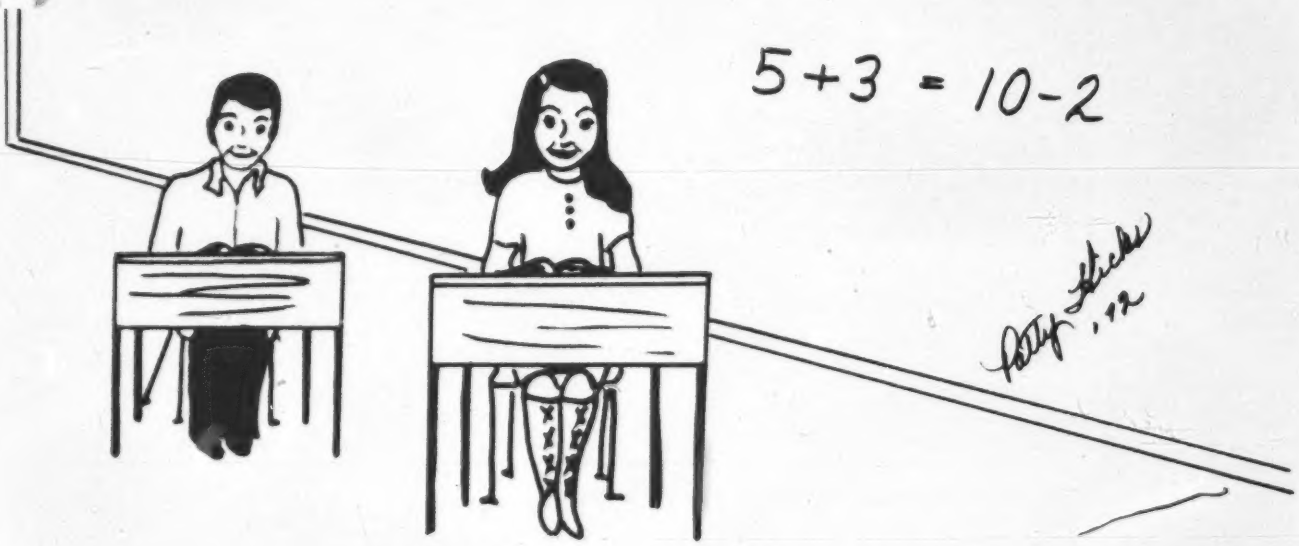

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FOREWORD

The Nevada State Department of Education is pleased to be able to publish this series as part of a continuing program of information on Nevada Indians.

This program is designed to provide Nevada's school population with information in order that they may have a greater awareness and understanding of the lifestyle, past and present, as well as the contributions made by the Native-Nevadans.

No attempt has been made to edit or alter the author's original manuscripts.

Chas. H. Poehlman, Consultant
(Indian Education)

0005

ABOUT

HELEN DUNN

A native of Leadville, Colorado, she came to Goldfield, Nevada, when a baby. There she went through the school system, and graduated from Esmeralda County High School with high honors.

She is a graduate of the University of Nevada, specializing in history and received a B.A. An M.A. degree in Journalism was received from the University of Colorado.

She taught in Goldfield High School and in Reno's Billinghurst Junior High School.

Helen Dunn has long been identified with the study of Nevada. She fostered such a study at Billinghurst where a section of the school's library is known as the Helen M. Dunn Nevada History Library.

She has written several Nevada booklets which will be published by the Nevada State Department of Education.

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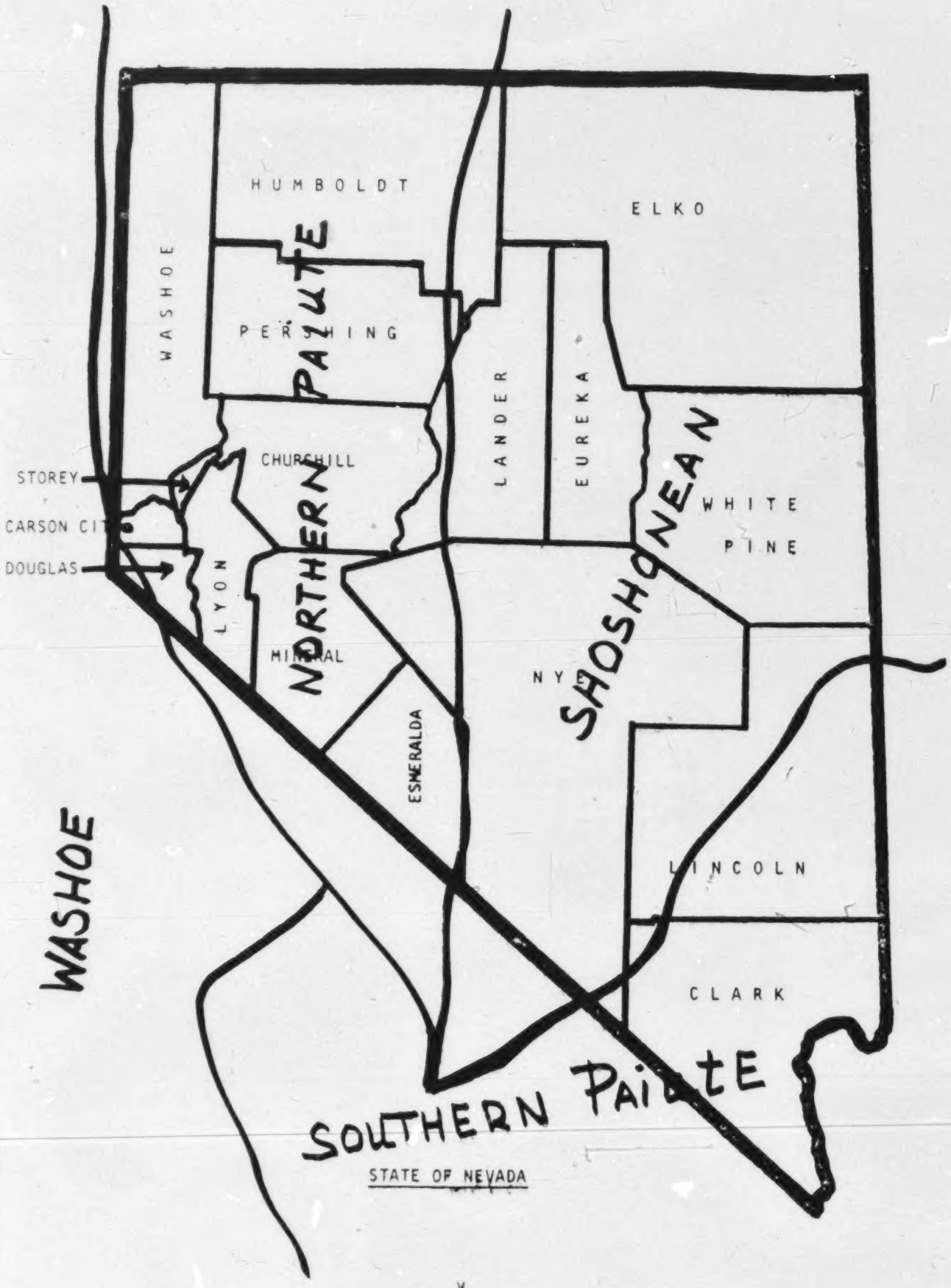
HUMBOLDT
ELKO
WASHOE
PERSHING
PAIUTE
LANDER
EUREKA
SHOSHONEAN
WHITE PINE
STOREY
CARSON CITY
CHURCHILL
DOUGLAS
LYON
NORTHERN
MINERAL
NYE
ESMERALDA
WASHOE
LINCOLN
CLARK
SOUTHERN Paiute
STATE OF NEVADA

VOLUME 6

CONTENTS

The Education of the Nevada Indian
Primitive Times

Pictures

Classroom Traits and Possible Causes

Picture

Important Facts of the Indian Pupil

Important Phases in the Education Story

Word Study

* * * * * * * *

THE EDUCATION OF THE NEVADA INDIAN

Primitive Times

The story of education in the life of the Indian of the Great Basin must start with its beginning--that of primitive times. What are some of the pertinent facts of this chapter of the so-called story?

1. The Indian child, in primitive times, received a practical education.

2. The family group extended to grandparents, uncles and aunts. Therefore, there were many people to help with the child's education.

3. The girls' education included gathering seeds with the women elders. The boys went hunting with their fathers, grandfathers, and uncles.

4. The boys and girls were given small useful tasks which increased as the children grew older. The elders taught and supervised these tasks.

5. This primitive education consisted of learning whatever was necessary for survival in difficult surroundings. This also might be added the gaining of knowledge concerning herbs, food plants, and medicines.

6. Because the parents were engaged with many tasks (primarily to keep the family from starving), the grandfather was responsible for the education of the Indian children.

7. In the education of the young, the grandfather imparted ethical and moral training in private. He would tell stories of the family which in them had lessons of right and wrong.

8. Skills that they would need were taught to the children. The boys were taught to practice those skills which might mean their life. One of these was running. Girls were taught to be proficient in gathering seeds and grinding flour.

9. An important lesson in this primitive education was that children were told not to steal, not to quarrel, not to be lazy.

10. In this early educational process, the grandfather was the one entrusted to pass on the family history and beliefs. In doing this, he called each child (one at a time) and told him about the family history about his family and those who had been great. He told him about the traditional family names. He told him what was expected from him.

11. In the educational process, the grandfather observed who, of the children, were intelligent and had a good memory. To these he gave additional family information.

0010

CLASSROOM TRAITS AND POSSIBLE CAUSES

When mentioning traits or as might be termed, quirks of character in an Indian child, it should be mentioned, also, the cause or explanation. Let's look at a few of these:

In the classroom, the Indian child is inclined to be reticent or non-responsive. Also, there is an element of sensitivity and a fear of inaccuracy which might cause ridicule.	This, in all probability, stems from shyness, to the realization that there is a lack of knowledge of the English language, and he does not completely understand the question.
There is sometimes a feeling of resentment, suspicion, and sometimes hatred.	These traits come perhaps from keep imprints caused by the early contacts with white culture. Many of these contacts were unfortunate.
There may be a feeling of suspicision, distrust and fear.	It is thought that this might come from the degree of association with the white children and how they are accepted.
A lack of confidence is evident at times in the performance of the same tasks done by white students.	This trait might stem from the fact that the early Indians were imbued with a sense of inferiority by the white man.

0011

IMPORTANT FACTS OF THE INDIAN PUPIL

To better acquaint oneself with the education of the Indian it might prove interesting to list facts of this phase of their lives. Some deal with the older culture, others bear on the life today.

1. The most ordinary Indian children will often display marked artistic talent. They like to draw and to color. In this they can express their thoughts and ideas, which are often denied them due to their language handicap.

2. Indian children show joy in singing, especially the younger ones. In the adolescent years, the girls are more interested than the boys.

3. The health of the Indian is often misrepresented. In their educational process, they have been instilled with the reasons for personal cleanliness, medical attention for injuries, and knowledge of first aid treatment.

4. In the health education of the Indians, one fact is evident. That one is that they should be admired for the perserverance they show in keeping themselves clean under the adverse conditions in which some of them live.

5. Another fact concerning the health education of the Indian is the dealing with the visiting of their homes. If the person comes as a friend and one interested in the welfare of the ones visited, he is welcome. The Indian resents curiosity seekers.

6. Home visitation often helps the Indian child in the classroom. By it, more understanding and tolerance can be shown in their failings.

7. If the parents of the Indian children get to know, to like and to respect the teachers, they will often encourage their children to respond in the classroom.

8. It is a mistaken notion that Indian children are incapable of learning. Often a change of approach or a change of attitude toward them will "perform wonders".

9. Some Indian children show, in their classroom work, pride and encouragement in staying with a problem until it is solved. This, perhaps, stems from the same traits shown by their ancestors in their fight for existence from the rugged and barren country.

0013

IMPORTANT PHASES IN THE EDUCATION STORY

In the educational story of the Indian these facts might further point out pertinent information as to Nevada's part in the saga. As said in 1964 by Melvin Thom, an Indian leader of the state, "We do not want to become white men. We only want to participate in the benefits of modern society."

1. After the coming of the white man into the Great Basin area "Ranch Schools" were established. Near the big sheep ranches, they were usually of adobe and part of the ranch home. The floor was only of dirt; the roof was thatched. They were one-room schools, with one teacher, who was often inferior in both ability and training. The furniture of the room, which served both Indian and non-Indian children, consisted of whatever was available. This often included various sizes of wooden boxes serving as chairs and desks.

2. It was not until the 1870's that four reservations were established in Nevada. With this development, the responsibility for Indian education became the duty of the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

3. Among the Indian Bureau's first accomplishments was the establishment, on the reservations, of Day Schools and, in some instances, Boarding Schools. These helped to provide the needed educational opportunities for the children of families residing in the area.

4. In 1873, the Moapa Reservation School was established. A Day School was established. A Day School was added there in the late 1800's.

5. In 1892, the Western Shoshone area in North Elko County changed their school to a Boarding School.

6. When there were enough children in one locality to make a school practical, a Day School was established.

7. Most Day Schools had only one teacher, but a few larger ones had several teachers. The Day School usually had a housekeeper who, with the help of the older girls, prepared the noon lunch. The U. S. Government furnished the supplies.

8. Half a day of vocational training was the rule in Day Schools.

9. A difficulty in the Day School was the fact that many children did not begin their educational process until they were eight or nine years of age. Also, most Indian children did not attend school until after the pinenuts were gathered in October.

0014

10. In the early Day Schools, books were scarce. People, therefore, brought their books with them. This accounted for the variety of books in use.

11. By the last part of the 1800's. Day schools had been established at Schurz, Nixon, Stillwater, Campbell Ranch (near Yerington), Lovelock, Yomba, Duckwater, McDermitt and Owyhee. In these schools, education was given for grades 1-6.

12. In some areas, Reservation Boarding Schools were established on the reservations. These had dormitories, as well as classrooms, and served the families within the reservation. One of the areas served by this type of school was the Western Shoshone Reservation in Northern Elko County.

13. The Reservation Boarding Schools was controlled by the agency of the area and by a principal who was responsible to the agent. Needed funds for this school, like those for the Day School, came from the U. S. Government.

14. Also present in the Nevada area were Non-Reservation Boarding Schools. Serving a larger region, they were located off the reservations. It was thought by the Indian Service that the Indian children should be removed as far as possible from their home environment.

    It is thought that these schools did not prove completely satisfactory. Parents were not in favor of taking the children out of their own environment. Another unfavorable point was that the children, upon their return to the reservation, were confronted with serious adjustment problems. It was thought by some that the Non-Reservation Boarding Schools destroyed the home and family security.

15. The Indian Bureau was at this time, under the War Department. Therefore, the Boarding Schools, maintained by the U. S. Government, were organized on a military basis. This applied to those both on or off the reservation.

    The pupils were dressed in uniforms, placed in platoons and companies, and had a student officer (appointed by the principal or superintendent) in command of them. They were kept there for three years (a period similar to enlistment).

    In the Boarding School, half the day was spent in classroom work, the other half was given to vocational training. In this latter field, girls did dish washing, laundry work, and floor scrubbing. The boys, did field and garden work, milking cows, shoe repair, and cutting lawns. Useful vocational training was also offered.

16. In 1890, the Stewart Institute was established. Located three miles south of Carson City, it was classed as a Non-Reservation Boarding School. It started with 37 pupils, served grades 1-10, and was open to all Indian children having no other educational facilities in Nevada. Vocational training was offered for such areas as carpentry, black-smithing, tailoring, shoe-making, sewing, cooking, farming, and other useful trades.

17. Although missionaries were deeply interested in the education of the Indians, mission churches were never an important part of Nevada's Indian education story. A school opened by a missionary, James J. Callan, in 1883, for the Western Shoshoni Agency, was closed by 1900.

18. Many surveys and studies have been made of the many phases of Indian education, of the many problems and needs. One of the facts brought to light were that, whenever possible, Indian children should be placed in the public schools.

The first Indian people in Nevada who requested a public school program were residents of the Duck Valley Reservation in Northern Elko County. Other Indian groups followed and, by 1956, all Day Schools had been converted to the public school idea.

One quotation on this phase of the Indian Education story says in part:

"The public school has the great advantage that the children are left in their own home and family setting. Indian children brought up in public schools with white children have the advantage of early contacts with whites while still retaining their connections with their Indian family and home."

19. The transition from Bureau of Indian Affairs-operated schools to public schools was a gradual process in response to the wishes of the Indian people involved. Pyramid Lake was an example of an orderly change. There, today, is found on the reservation the Natchez Public School District.

20. Other legislation making for better education for the Indians came in 1947. At that time, the administration of Indian education programs became a part of the State Department of Education.

21. It can be stated here that the assimilation of Indians into the public school program (in all grades of learning) has been so successful as to place Nevada in a position of leadership in this phase of education among the western states.

22. In summary, it can be stated

(1) that the mandate of Congress, since 1934, advocating the education of Indian youth in public schools is being carried out in the State of Nevada;
(2) that Nevada Indian people recognize the value of education and consider it the foundation upon which their entire future depends.

WORD STUDY

1. pertinent
2. practical
3. education
4. elders
5. tasks
6. necessary
7. survival
8. difficult
9. surroundings
10. knowledge

1. concerning
2. herbs
3. medicine
4. parents
5. engaged
6. primarily
7. responsible
8. imparted
9. ethical
10. moral

1. training
2. proficient
3. process
4. entrusted
5. beliefs
6. tradition
7. observed
8. intelligent
9. memory
10. additional

1. mention
2. traits
3. quirks
4. cause
5. explanation
6. inclined
7. responsive
8. element
9. reticent
10. sensitivity

1. inaccuracy
2. ridicule
3. resentment
4. suspicion
5. hatred
6. probability
7. shyness
8. realization
9. complete
10. question

0017

Word Study - continued

1. imprints
2. unfortunate
3. distrust
4. association
5. accepted
6. confidence
7. evident
8. performance
9. imbued
10. inferiority

1. ordinary
2. artistic
3. express
4. denied
5. handicap
6. especially
7. adolescent
8. instilled
9. personal
10. evident

1. perséverance
2. adverse
3. conditions
4. welfare
5. resents
6. curiosity
7. tolerance
8. encourage
9. approach
10. perform

1. encouragement
2. saga
3. participate
4. benefits
5. society
6. usually
7. adobe
8. teacher
9. servations
10. affairs

1. bureau
2. residing
3. practical
4. prepared
5. supplies
6. difficulty
7. variety
8. dormitory
9. families
10. principal

0018

Word Study - continued

1. environment
2. adjustment
3. security
4. applied
5. uniforms
6. platoons
7. companies
8. command
9. similar
10. vocational

1. facilities
2. missionaries
3. surveys
4. converted
5. transition
6. gradual
7. program
8. assimilation
9. summary
10. recognize